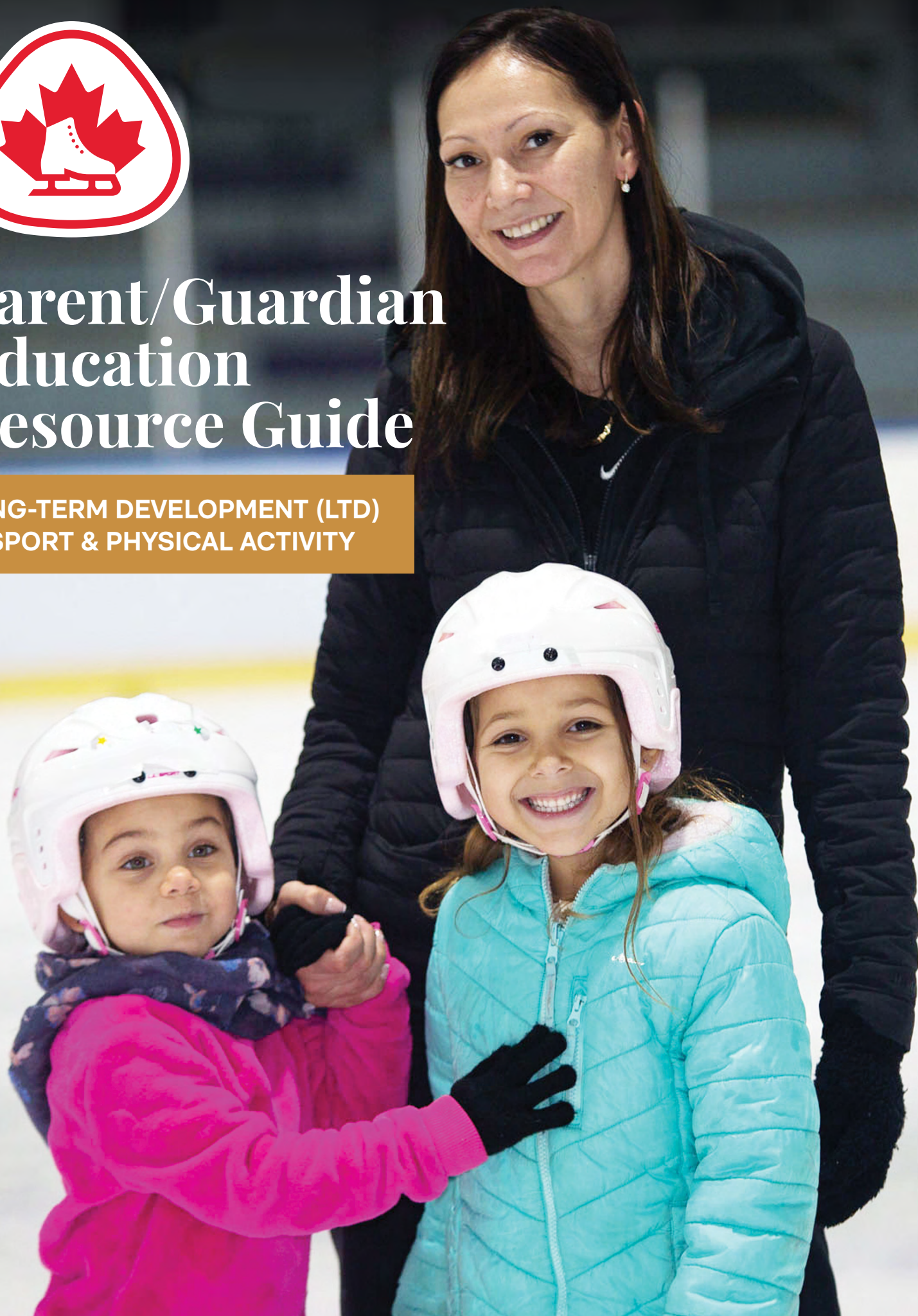




Parent/Guardian Education Resource Guide

LONG-TERM DEVELOPMENT (LTD)
IN SPORT & PHYSICAL ACTIVITY



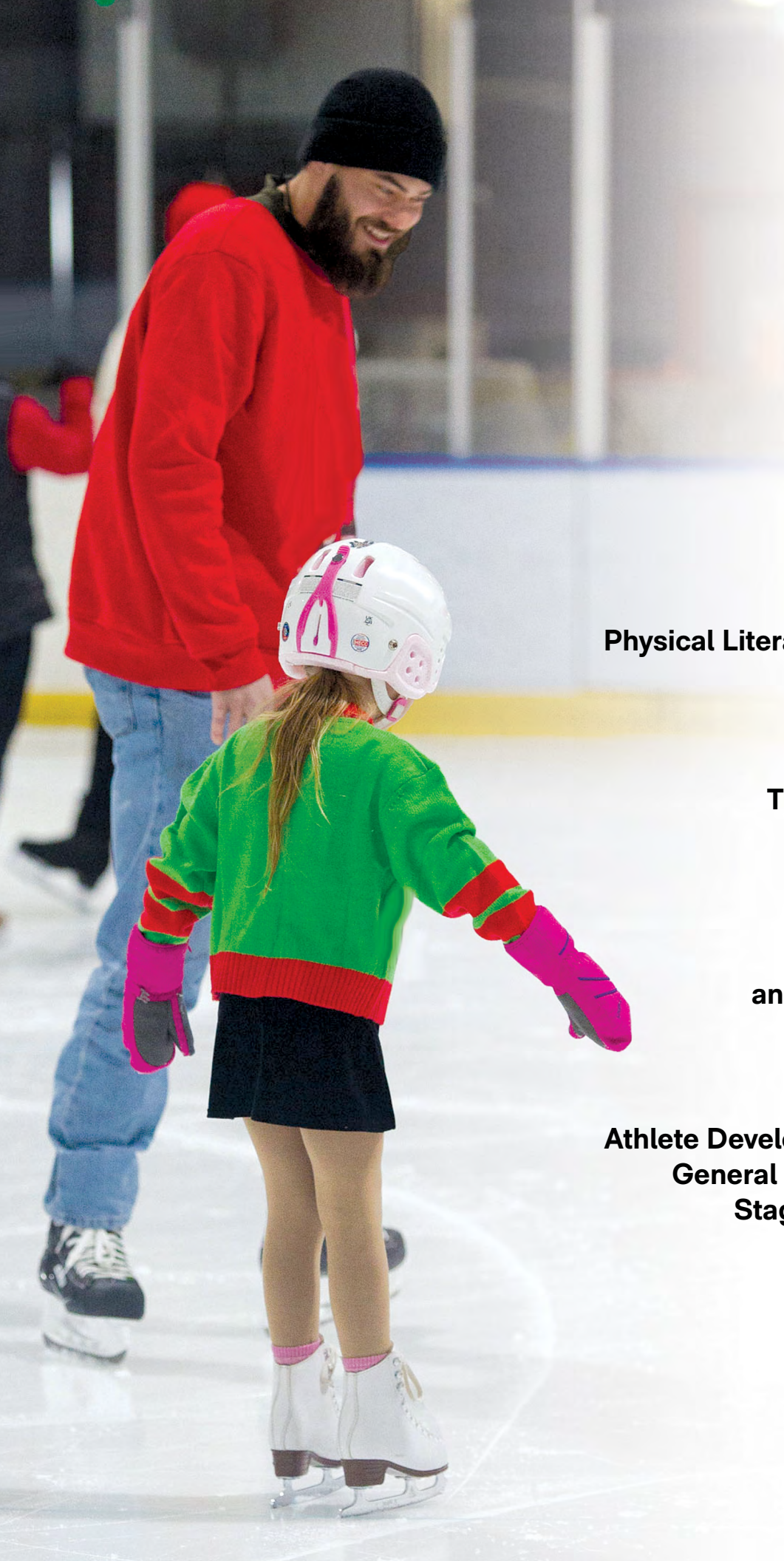


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Introduction

As parents/guardians, we recognize that sport and physical activity can play an important role in youth development, growth, and mental health.

Long-Term Development (LTD) in Sport and Physical Activity is an evidence based framework that is athlete-centered, coach-driven, and administration/sport science supported. LTD is also a progressive pathway of development that recognizes the distinct stages of physical, mental, cognitive, and emotional development in participants. To enable optimal participation, LTD considers growth, maturation and development, trainability, and sport system alignment.

The Canadian Sport Ecosystem plays a crucial role in LTD, and Skate Canada is a proud partner with the organizations below.



The following core principles underlie Skate Canada's LTD:

- Maintain focus on the concept that development is a process that takes time, and that sport and physical activity experiences are based on the individual's needs and stage of development.
- Strive for excellence and reinforce the idea that long-term development is important both in sport performance and for life-long engagement in physical activity for health.
- Empower humans to be active for life.

Using [Sport for Life's Long-Term Development in Sport and Physical Activity 3.0](#) as a framework, Skate Canada has created resources to support two development pathways. The Star Pathway to support Star 1-Gold skaters and the Podium Pathway to support pre-novice to senior skaters. These development pathways for each discipline of our sport encourages life-long activity and wellness, holistic skill acquisition and development, and includes detailed information related to technical and tactical skills, mental and self-skills, and physical capacities.

Why do children participate in sport? Children often participate in sport and physical activity to:

- Have fun.
- Experience thrills.
- Be with friends or make new friends.
- Experience teamwork and social interaction.
- Build positive self-esteem and do something they are good at.
- Feel good about themselves, feel accepted.
- Set goals and challenge themselves to improve and learn new skills.

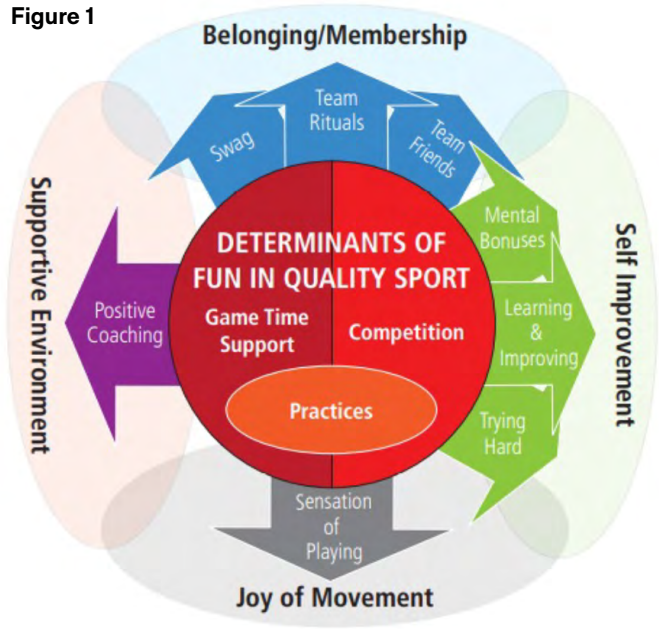


FUN is a must-have and is seen as a key element in sport programming. The following figure has been developed from the early work of Dr. Amanda Visek, which identifies key determinants of fun within a quality sport environment.

Through this guide, we will provide information and guidance relevant for parents/guardians on how to support your child's physical, mental, and emotional skills in sport. This guide will also highlight some of Skate Canada's LTD stages of development, emphasize important concepts for parents/guardians to understand, and provide guidelines on how to positively influence your child's participation in our sport.

Figure 1: With permission from Sport for Life, the Determinants of Fun in Quality Sport figure was redrawn based on the work of Dr. Amanda Visek and colleagues (2015). The George Washington University, Milken Institute of Public Health, Department of Exercise & Nutrition Sciences.

Figure 1



Physical Literacy / Movement Skills

Physical literacy is important to understand for anyone with a role in human development. Physical literacy is the development of fundamental movement skills (run, jump, throw, swim) as well as motor skills (agility, balance, coordination, speed) and fundamental sport skills. Physical literacy, while vital during the early stages of development, can and should continue to develop throughout one's life. Physical literacy enables people of all ages to move confidently and efficiently in any environment that presents a physical challenge. It is an important life skill, and the benefits of physical literacy go far beyond sport participation. CanSkate (as an example) centers on physical literacy and the fundamental skills needed to take part in any ice sport or to simply skate as an activity.

For a well-rounded physical literacy experience, children should learn movement and sport skills in four basic environments:

- On the ground: the basis of most games, sports, dances, and physical activities.
- In the water: the basis of all aquatic activities.
- On the snow and ice: the basis of all winter sports and activities.
- In the air: the basis for figure skating, gymnastics, diving, and other aerial activities.

Developing physical literacy requires a combined effort from parents/guardians, teachers, and coaches. In simple terms, it is the competence, confidence, knowledge, and motivation to engage in physical activity for life. Physical literacy is essential and needs to be actively developed in a nurturing, supporting, and encouraging manner.

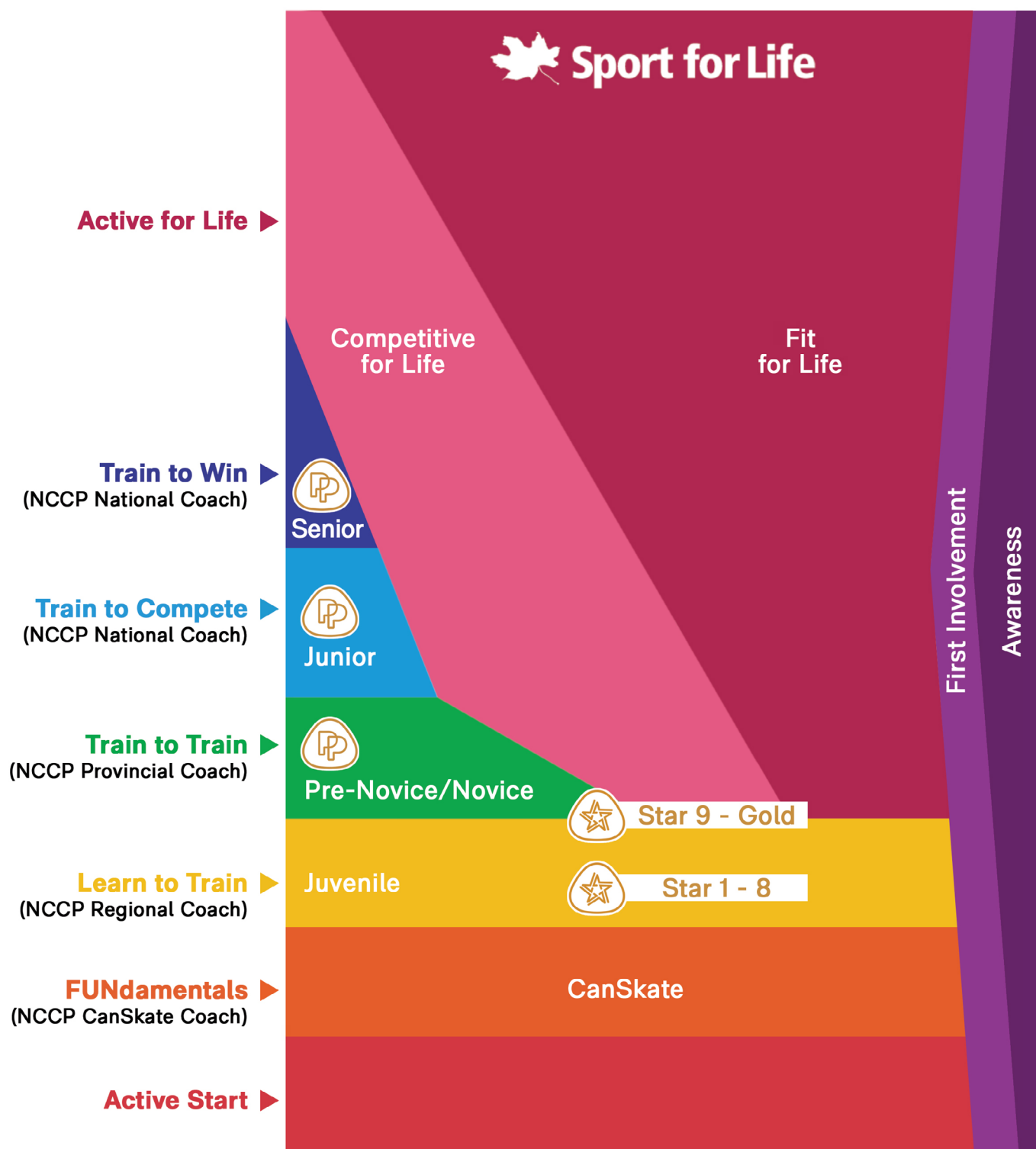
Individuals who are physically literate move with competence and confidence in a wide variety of physical activities that benefit the healthy development of the whole person. For a positive physical literacy experience, we encourage parents/guardians to consider having their child spend a significant amount of time in various forms of activity in which unstructured play is promoted. Cross sport participation at the FUNdamental stage can also result in highly functional, injury resistant participants.

To learn more, please refer to "[Developing Physical Literacy: Building a New Normal for all Canadians](#)" provided by [Sport for Life](#). We also recommend the resources available on the Active for Life: Raising physically literate kids [website](#), under the Parents section.



The LTD Sport Pathway

Although the following Skate Canada LTD rectangle defines the Podium Pathway and the STAR Pathway, there are many pathway directions for participants to explore. From Learn to Train and onwards, the Canadian system provides performance opportunities at the club, regional, provincial, national, and international levels in all four skating disciplines of our sport – singles, pair skating, synchronized skating, and ice dance.



Parents play a pivotal role in sport and this guide provides information specific to the FUNdamentals, Learn to Train, and Train to Train stages of development.

FUNdamentals	Learn to Train	Train to Train
In providing positive and diverse skating experiences through the delivery of comprehensive quality learn-to-skate programming, participants at this stage partake in a variety of structured and unstructured activities that develop fundamental movement skills. Through age-appropriate activities and proper equipment, the fundamental movement skills become the building blocks of success in our sport and life-long enjoyment of physical activity. At this stage, the basic premises are FUN, fitness, and FUNdamentals. There should be no participation in formal competition at this stage.	Participants who have the desire to learn/develop figure skating skills will be streamed into Star 1-5. In this phase of development, it is all about learning a wide range of foundational figure skating skills. At the entry of the Learn to Train stage, this program focuses on teaching the participants how to train. The program is built on repetitive type exercises or drills to reinforce development and training strategies. In the Learn to Train stage, participants are encouraged to acquire a skill set that will allow them to reach the highest level of proficiency that their unique talent and commitment will allow. Progressing through this stage is defined by technical skill acquisition and development rather than chronological age.	At this stage, participants may train at the Star 9-Gold, or the Pre-Novice/Novice levels within the Podium Pathway. Participants are ready to consolidate their basic sport-specific skills and tactics. Focus must remain on skills training and physical development over competition. Train to Train is critical for the development and retention of athletes. At this stage, injury prevention and management become more important as intensity and volume of training increase.

National Coaching Certification Program (NCCP)

Coaches at this stage are trained, evaluated, and certified through the <u>NCCP CanSkate Coach pathway</u> .	Coaches at this stage are trained, evaluated, and certified through the <u>NCCP Regional Coach pathway</u> .	Coaches at this stage are trained, evaluated, and certified through the <u>NCCP Provincial Coach pathway</u> .
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Coaches need a specific NCCP qualification to coach a particular Skate Canada program or attend a competition with a skater. They are also members of Skate Canada and need to be registered in good standing.

To obtain this status, coaches need to:

- Complete a screening with BackCheck (every three years).
- Obtain a valid first aid certificate (every three years).
- Complete the Respect in Sport Activity Leader training (every three years).
- Complete the Skate Canada Code of Ethics training (every year).
- Obtain and maintain a current NCCP certified status with the Coaching Association of Canada (CAC).
- Pay an annual fee to obtain a wide range of benefits including coaches' liability insurance.

For further information, we encourage you to review the [Coach Membership Procedure](#).

Creating a Supportive and Empathetic Mindset

A parent's/guardian's contribution to nurturing their child's mental and emotional skills in skating begins with the development of a healthy mindset towards the sport. This starts with an empathetic awareness of the psychological and physiological demands of skating and consideration of the values and expectations that they project onto their child. The following are three basic principles to keep in mind:

- Understand the multiple demands of skating.
- Adopt a values-based approach.
- Communicate positive values around achievement.

Parents/guardians should educate themselves on physical literacy and the principles of LTD. It is important that parents/guardians work toward understanding coaching decisions, and being supportive partners in their child's progress, training, and competition. Whether it's driving your child to the rink, volunteering at a skating club, or providing a listening and supportive ear, parents/guardians have an important role to play that can impact a child's interest and enthusiasm for years to come. Being involved, in a positive way, means you provide encouragement, support, and practical help.

Here are a few key parent/guardian behaviours to keep in mind as you navigate through our sport with your child:

- **Being supportive:** It is important and healthy to constantly reassure your child that you support their efforts and are proud of them. Make time to watch their skating session or competitive performance when possible and invest your time in their development.
- **Being encouraging:** Being present and encouraging following a good and/or difficult sport experience will provide opportunities for your child to recognize their strengths and allow them to grow. Tone, body, and facial expression tell so much more of our truth than the words that we use. When things don't go as planned,

your role is to not only help your child deal with the disappointment—but also learn from it. Empathy, along with encouragement and adaptability can result in positive change and building resilience, which is a skill your child can use both on and off the ice, and for years to come.

- **Being informed and knowledgeable:** Take time to educate yourself by accessing the resources available to you and by establishing a good communication line and relationship with your child's coach.
- **Being a role model:** Children need to adopt and maintain a healthy lifestyle to perform well and reduce the risk of injury. As a parent/guardian, you can help them achieve these goals. Serve healthy foods, stress the importance of good nutrition and proper sleep. By leading the way, your child may follow along.



Athlete Development Matrix (ADM), General Sport Information and Stage Specific Objectives

As a parent/guardian, you can encourage your child in sport and physical activity at each LTD stage. Skate Canada's LTD Resource tool includes three different Athlete Development Matrices (ADMs) - Technical/Tactical ADM, Mental & Self Skills ADM, and Physical Capacities ADM. We have compiled some of the information from the following two ADMs and other LTD in Sport and Physical Activity resources to provide parents/guardians an awareness on these areas of development.

- **Technical/Tactical:** This ADM focuses on aspirational targets in singles, pairs, ice dance, and synchronized skating. Each athlete will progress through this pathway based upon their individual skill acquisition. These benchmarks are established to support training strategies and holistic skill development.
- **Mental and Self-Skills:** This ADM outlines the mental and self-skills attributes that are developmentally and generally impactful to an athletes' wellbeing and performance as it focuses on the social and emotional development of the participant. The context or environment is vital to ensure athletes are exposed to this information and are taught how to develop specific mental and self-skills throughout the LTD stages of development.
- **Physical Capacities:** This ADM was created to support the acquisition, continued development and consistent performance of the technical skills outlined in the Technical/Tactical ADM. The primary focus is to respect and support healthful growth and athletic development by building physical literacy and addressing foundational movement competency and aerobic capacity.

The following information will focus on the Mental and Self-Skills and Physical Capacities ADMs and highlight specific areas relevant for parents/guardians. The complete ADMs can be accessible on the [Skate Canada LTD Resource webpage](#).



FUNdamentals

Athlete Development Matrices (ADM)			Role of Parents/Guardians General Sport Information
Mental & Self-Skills	Autonomy	Parent/guardian encourages skater to pack own equipment.	- The primary role of parents/guardians at this stage is to act as good role models, provide encouragement, provide balanced, healthy food choices, and promote an active and healthy lifestyle. - Parents/guardians can also participate in activities such as parent days, shows, and parent/child classes when they are available. - Participants at this stage of development should also be provided with the opportunity to try several activities as well as being active in other sports and physical activity opportunities. - Remember that several short bursts of activity are probably better at this stage than one long sport session. - Inquire with coaches and club administrators about their skating program and if they apply LTD principles. - Check if your child's activities address the ABC's of athleticism: agility, balance, coordination/control, and speed. - Continue to encourage your child in unstructured play outside of formal activities. - Talk to your child about the importance of having fun and enjoying participation.
	Competence	Parent/guardian provides encouragement to athlete.	
	Connectedness	- Parent/guardian encourages friendships with other skaters. - Parent/guardian expresses gratitude to coaches.	
Physical Capacities	Physical Skills Literacy / Movement Fitness Skills	- Athlete will develop ABC's – Agility, balance, and control. - Athlete will develop fundamental movement skills (physical literacy) in an exploratory fashion through free play and a variety of sports/activities.	
	Aerobic Fitness	- Athlete should accumulate at least 60 min/day of moderate to vigorous activity through a variety of basic locomotor skills like running, jumping, riding a bike, etc. and in a variety of environments. Children and Youth 5-17 years : CSEP SCPE (csepguidelines.ca)	
	Mobility & Flexibility	Athlete will build some Range of Motion (ROM) through multi-sport/play practice. This is normally developed through active play with focus on stretching and reaching activities.	
	Strength, Stability, & Power	- Introduce body weight movement pattern development. - Continued informal development through play and a variety of activities.	

Physical Capacities	Nutrition & Fueling	- Athlete will be introduced to concepts for building a healthy relationship with food and mindful eating practices. - Athlete will be introduced to fueling for activity. - Athlete/parent/guardian should focus on ensuring food security and opting for quality of food choices. - Attention should be provided to parent and athlete on nutrition education. - Supportive nutrition for growth and development. - Athlete/parent/guardian exposed to proper nutrition habits, general practices, and concepts. Canada's Food Guide - Athlete/parent/guardian should be mindful of healthy eating practices. Be mindful of your eating habits - Canada's Food Guide
	Supplements	- Focus on high quality food choices, food first approach. - Introduce parents and skaters on risk of supplements and considerations when reviewing the use of health and sport supplements.
	Physique Monitoring	- Positive body image features and concepts are introduced to parents/guardians, coaches, and skaters. - Zero performance focus on body composition. - No body composition assessments.
	Recovery and Regeneration	Ensure athlete has adequate rest and regeneration between and within activities to meet the demands of physical and neurodevelopmental growth.
	Sleep	10-11 hours of maintaining a regular bedtime/sleep/nap routine. - Athlete and parents/guardians are introduced to the concepts of proper sleep.



Learn to Train – Star 1-8/Juvenile

Athlete Development Matrices (ADM)			Role of Parents/Guardians General Sport Information
Mental & Self-Skills	Autonomy	• Parent/guardian allows athletes to get themselves ready for training. • Parent/guardian encourages athletes to teach them about skating. • Parent/guardian allows athletes to get themselves ready for competition (hair, makeup, etc.).	• The role of parents/guardians at the Learn to Train stage is like FUNdamentals. The responsibilities include providing balanced, healthy food choices and promoting an active and healthy lifestyle. There should be a continued interest in activities but also openness to hearing and accepting children's preferences. • Individuals at this stage of development should continue to be encouraged to participate in other sports and activities where fun and success are experienced. • Parents/guardians should ensure that a balance is maintained between school, other sport, and non-sport activity commitments. • Understand the activity and training program of your child to make sure they are not over-training, over-competing, or specializing too early. Talk to your child's coach if you have concerns. • Find out if your child's training and development is being supported by quality physical education programs at school.
	Competence	• Parent/guardian compares athlete to oneself not others. • Parent/guardian provides encouragement to athlete and teammates. • Parent/guardian provides encouragement that is focused on an athlete's individual improvement.	
	Connectedness	• Parent/guardian helps athlete engage in activities outside of skating. • Parent/guardian encourages friendship outside of skating. • Parent/guardian facilitates opportunities for connecting with others. • Parent/guardian does not speak poorly of others (coach, skater, judge, parent, etc.).	
	Awareness of Self & Others	• Coach/parent asks questions to assist athlete in developing self-awareness. • Coach/parent helps athlete to understand their impact on others.	
	Social Media & Communication Guidelines	• Athlete understands that social media is a tool used to stay connected with friends and family and has reviewed privacy settings with a parent/guardian for any active profiles. • Coach and athlete only communicate in the training and competition environments. If additional communication is required, coach should contact the parent/guardian. All communication (including private messaging) should include a parent. • All coach interactions and communications with minor athletes must follow the Rule of Two guidelines as set by the Coaching Association of Canada. • Athlete, coach, and parent decide on the best communication method to discuss skating related items.	

Physical Capabilities	Athlete/ Parent-Coach Relationship	- Athlete/parents/guardians have a healthy and respectful relationship with the coach. - Athletes/parents/guardians understand the role of a coach. - Athletes/parents/guardians understand boundaries in an athlete-coach relationship. - Coach demonstrates professional behaviours to all athletes/parents/ guardians.
	Physical Literacy / Movement Skills	- Athletes continue to develop physical literacy. - Window of opportunity for skill acquisition. - Athletes in early STAR levels will be introduced to a broad movement competency platform to underpin future structural tolerance. This platform will be further explored in later STAR levels.
	Aerobic Fitness	- Athlete will be introduced to the concept of a proper warm-up and a proper cool-down. - Athlete should continue to participate in moderate to vigorous activity through a variety of aerobic activities at least 60 min/day. - Athlete should participate in a variety of aerobic activities through other sports & group focused off-ice activities. - Athlete will be introduced to concept of intensity based training on Rating of Perceived Exertion (RPE), breathing rate, &/or heart rate (HR) max.
	Mobility & Flexibility	- Athlete will be introduced to active flexibility/mobility. - Athlete will develop optimal ROM (range of motion) through natural active play. - Athlete will develop active flexibility/mobility, with care during/immediately following growth spurts. Important to develop control through range.
	Strength, Stability, & Power	- Athlete will continue body weight movement competency development. - Athlete will be introduced to Window of trainability for speed development. - Athlete will be introduced to systematic activities in which body weight is supported by arms/legs. - For further information beyond Star 1-5 levels, we encourage parents/guardians to access the complete ADM on the Skate Canada LTD Resource webpage.
	Periodization	- Athlete to focus on high quality training over competition. - Introduce Star 1-5 athlete to 1 or 2 local competitions that emphasize fun. - Star 6-8 athlete to participate in regional &/or national competitions based on developmentally appropriate stage. - Star 6-8 athlete will be introduced to concept of Daily Training Environment (DTE) to support competition environment.
	Nutrition & Fueling	- Continued development of skater's healthy relationship with food and mindful eating practices. - Introduce mindful eating as it applies to sport and performance. - Introduce meal planning and preparation to support optimal fueling for training and competition demands. - Introduce and develop nutrition recovery and competition nutrition strategies. - Supportive nutrition for growth, development, and injury. - Attention to both parent and athlete on nutrition education.

Physical Capabilities	Physique Monitoring	• Provide awareness and education to athlete on natural progression of puberty and maturation. • Continue to promote positive body image guidelines. • To assess growth and development and obtainment of adequate fueling, continue the use body composition measurements for health purposes.
	Recovery and Regeneration	• Athlete will be introduced to the concept of rest, recovery, and sleep as part of training. • Athlete should recognize recovery as an important part of the training plan & allow for adequate rest days to avoid injury.
	Sleep	• Star 1-5 athlete should maintain 9.5-10 hours of regular sleep/nap routine. • Star 6-8 athlete should be introduced to napping strategies and maintain 9.0 hours of regular sleep/nap routine. • Star 6-8 athlete should focus on proper sleep and recovery through adolescent growth spurt.



Train to Train – Star 9-Gold / Pre-Novice-Novice

Athlete Development Matrices (ADM)			Role of Parents/Guardians General Sport Information
Mental & Self-Skills	Autonomy	- Parent/guardian helps prepare athlete so they can travel alone. - Parent/guardian encourages athlete to make choices and actively plan their schedule.	- Your involvement in your child's training probably changes at this stage. Up until now, you have most likely been directly involved — for example, helping your child learn movement skills. At this stage, your child is more independent, and your role is more an advisory one. - Parents/guardians at this stage need to support the achievement of personal best performances at competitions. The focus needs to be on performance and not on result outcomes. - Regular communication with coaches on issues that may affect your child's training (e.g., home situations, school, etc.) should occur. At the same time, parents/guardians need to let coaches take control of on and off-ice development of athletes. Parents/guardians must trust the coach, talk, and provide advice to the skater and intervene only when necessary. - At this stage of development, support teams may begin to expand and include expertise from choreographers, off-ice trainers, sport psychologists or mental performance consultants, in addition to the main coach. It is very important that parents/guardians understand their role so that the skater may progress in harmony with the expectations of the coaching team. - At this stage, better quality equipment starts to matter more. Equipment that suits a skater's size, strength, and ability makes things more fun and reduces the chances of injury.
	Competence	- Parent/guardian celebrates appropriately. - Parent/guardian allows athlete to be disappointed.	
	Connectedness	- Parent/guardian does not speak poorly of others (coach, skater, judge, parent, etc.). - Parent/guardian supports skating club.	
	Social Media & Communication Guidelines	- Coach and athlete only communicate in the training and competition environments. If additional communication is required, coach should contact the parent/guardian. - All communication (including private messaging) should include a parent. - All coach interactions and communications with minor athletes must follow the Rule of Two guidelines as set by the Coaching Association of Canada.	

Physical Capabilities	Physical Literacy / Movement Skills	• Performance foundation. • Continued structural tolerance and movement competency development. • Quality of movement focus. • All round athleticism
	Aerobic Fitness	• Continued development and utilization of proper warm-up/warm-down or in skating term “cool-down”. • Recommended that athletes continue to participate in other sports. • Continue development of aerobic training intensities based on % of HRmax or RPE zones. • Introduce concept of changing duration, volume & intensity to improve work capacity.
	Mobility & Flexibility	• Develop active flexibility/mobility, with care during/immediately following growth spurts. • Critical time to maintain ROM through both static and dynamic mobility.
	Periodization	• Athlete will be introduced to the concept of a yearly training plan (YTP). • Athlete to receive a meaningful competition plan to support practice, with emphasis on the process of competing. • Athlete to begin experiencing a Daily Training Environment (DTE) to support competition environment.
	Nutrition & Fueling	• Refer to Learn to Train as the information is the same.
	Physique Monitoring	• Refer to Learn to Train as the information is the same.
	Recovery and Regeneration	• Continued emphasis on rest & recovery as an important part of training. • Introduce & evaluate different recovery strategies (e.g., compression garments, massage, ice bath) based on sport specific demands.
	Sleep	• Athlete to sleep 9 hours and maintain a regular sleep routine. • Athlete to continue practicing napping strategies. • Focus on proper sleep and recovery through adolescent growth spurt.

We encourage parents/guardians to access Skate Canada's LTD resource tool on the Membership Site to access the complete Mental & Self-Skills and Physical Capacities ADMs, for both Star and Podium pathways.

Balanced development in sport and physical activity means paying attention to more than just technical skills. Development across a range of domains including physical, technical, tactical, psychological, and self-skills must be addressed for personal advancement throughout all stages of Long-Term Development.

We encourage parents/guardians to further their knowledge on LTD resources that are available on the Skate Canada website including the Technical and Tactical ADMs for all LTD stages of development including Train to Compete and Train to Win. Skate Canada will also be developing the Active for Life stage over the next quadrennial.

We also recommend parents/guardians to become familiar with the following additional resources:

[Skate Canada's Body Positive Guidelines](#)
[Best Practices: Sport Science for Skating DTE](#)
[Nutrition and Athletic Performance Position Paper](#)
[IOC RED-S / Female Athlete Triad Consensus Statements](#)
[Skate Canada Coach Guide](#)
[Ethical Coaching Behaviour and Best Practices](#)



References

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LONG-TERM DEVELOPMENT IN SPORT & PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

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